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## DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING LESSON

As I have pointed out in my article on *The Direct Method Applied to the Teaching of Scandinavian*, most of our Scandinavian students (it would be interesting to know the percentage) have, when they begin the Scandinavian course, already the ability to read and understand without translating a passage in their Scandinavian language that in difficulty is suited to their stage of advancement; that is, most of them are able to understand some Scandinavian (whether or not they have actually had practise in reading it), and practically all of these who can understand it, read it in the proper way, that is, they read the Scandinavian as they would read English, and they do not translate it to get the meaning.

There are, however, in our classes frequently enough students who are not on the same basis as the greater part of the class, and in such a mixed class it is desirable to level matters in such a way that the students who cannot understand Scandinavian, or who cannot understand it without translating, acquire the same method of reading as the rest of the class possesses. For such cases the following directions on how to study a foreign language reading lesson should be of value, especially as it will rarely be possible to make the class entirely fit the level of the more elementary type of students. Also the other students may here find something or other of value. I originally prepared these directions for students studying other languages than Scandinavian, and they are intended especially for students entering courses above the elementary course and who have not through the use of the direct method (or by accident in some other way) acquired the proper method of reading. To teachers who may find the following directions of value to students or classes, I should suggest having them multigraphed and distributed among the students.

The directions as printed herewith contain nothing new or striking. But some of our teachers may have felt the desirability of giving their students suggestions of this kind, and for such I may have lightened the burden of arranging the material for themselves.

(1) First read through the entire assignment silently, without consulting vocabulary, dictionary, or notes, and without thinking of English equivalents (that is, *without translating*). The object

of this reading is as far as possible to understand the meaning of the text; make an effort by close concentration to get increasingly good results from this rapid reading, but do not feel uneasy if much of the meaning remains unclear.

(2) Then go through the assignment sentence by sentence as follows, *without translating in any instance*: Read the first sentence silently; then,

(a) if the meaning is clear, read the sentence aloud at your natural speed (the speed with which you normally read English), taking care as to good pronunciation and good intonation (good intonation=use of stress, pitch, and quantity in accordance with the sense of the passage read). The meaning of what you thus read should be clear to you as you read along. Then pass on to the next sentence, treating it in the same way.

(b) if the meaning is not clear, then do not give up at once, but reread the sentence several times silently. If the sentence contains no unfamiliar words or idioms, the meaning will in almost all instances become clear from the repeated reading. If the sentence does contain unfamiliar words or idioms, the context will in very many cases make clear their meaning. If the meaning becomes clear, then read the sentence aloud in the manner stated under (a), and pass on.

(c) if the unfamiliar words or idioms do not become clear from the context after repeated readings as stated under (b), then look up the meaning of these words or idioms in the vocabulary and notes (but do not write the meaning between the lines). When the meanings that fit the context of the sentence as you already know it are thus clear in your mind, then *do not translate*, but reread the sentence silently, repeating the reading if the meaning of the whole sentence is not clear at once. Then read the sentence aloud in the manner stated under (a), and pass on.

(3) When the whole assignment has been gone through in this way, then read the whole assignment through once silently for the meaning. Thereupon read the whole assignment through once aloud. If time permits, read it through aloud more than once. The loud reading should be done as stated under 2 (a). While the pronunciation during the connected loud reading should be at least as good as the loud reading of isolated sentences was, the *intonation* should be much better. Never let the loud reading

approach the level of a mere ramble of words; that the meaning of what you read shall be clear to you as you read along is the fundamental requirement.

NOTE 1. Whenever time permits, the following modification of the method of study outlined above should be used *after* the whole assignment has been read silently as stated in (1): Read the first paragraph (stanza, or part in a play) through silently. Then go through the paragraph sentence by sentence as outlined in (2). Thereupon read the paragraph first silently and then aloud. Then go on to the next paragraph. Finally read the whole assignment silently and aloud as stated in (3).

NOTE 2. Loud reading may in any instance be substituted for the silent reading if you are able to concentrate as well on the meaning of what you read when you read aloud as when you read silently. But in no case is silent reading to be substituted for the loud reading.

NOTE 3. It is very important that the preparation of the reading lesson as outlined above should be completed in one continuous period of study. Interrupted study will lead to much inferior results, though the total aggregate of time spent be the same.

NOTE 4. In the class recitation, as far as the reading assignment is concerned, the student is responsible for: (1) the meaning (*not* in English translation), and (2) the ability to read it aloud correctly and fluently, and with such intonation that the reading shows that the student knows the meaning and that he is able to follow the meaning as he reads aloud.

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